



The **Salina** **citizen**

FALL 2008

Salina's Proposed Capital Improvement **SALES TAX**

An investment in our community's future!

At the **November 4th** general election, the City of Salina will be asking the voters to replace the current 1/4 cent (.25%) sales tax with a slightly higher 4/10 cent (.40%) capital improvement sales tax that will last 10 years. This tax is to pay for capital projects throughout the community. By placing this issue on the ballot, your local government is not making this decision for you, but ensuring you have the opportunity to weigh the benefits and make this decision on behalf of the entire community. Provided is the ballot language and answers to some of your most popular questions. The ballot will be worded as follows:

Shall the following be adopted?

Shall the City of Salina, Kansas be authorized to impose a 0.40 percent (0.40%) city-wide retailers' special purpose sales tax, which shall commence on April 1, 2009 or as soon thereafter as permitted by law, and shall terminate ten (10) years after its commencement, the proceeds of which shall be used to pay the cost of capital improvement projects; major equipment; construction, operation and maintenance of a family aquatic park in the Kenwood Park area; debt service on bonds issued for such projects; property tax stabilization; and the continuation of an economic development fund managed by the City of Salina?

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Dear Salina Citizen,

The City of Salina is pleased to present to you the fall 2008 edition of The Salina Citizen. We hope this issue informs you about City projects, and stimulates your interest and participation in local government.

In this exciting and challenging time for our community, the City Commission and members of City staff encourage you to ask questions and make your views known!

We look forward to hearing from you and working with you to meet the challenges ahead.

Sincerely,
Salina City Commission

email:
citycommission@salina.org

website:
www.salina-ks.gov

How much will this change the current sales tax rate?

The total sales tax for Salina is now 7.05%. This means that we pay \$7.05 for every \$100 spent for most purchases. If the proposed sales tax is approved, the total will be 7.20%. The difference of .15% is equal to paying **15 cents more for the same \$100 spent**. For \$500 spent, the tax amount is about the cost of a cup of coffee.



When does the current sales tax expire?

If a replacement sales tax is not approved by the voters, the current sales tax will expire in early 2010. This is one reason why voters will only see one tax question. The other reasons are that multiple ballot issues are confusing, the marginal increase is very minimal (15 cents per \$100 spent) and even a project the size of the family aquatic park will use only about 1/3rd of the total tax proceeds.

*Salina's Proposed Sales Tax
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Salina's Proposed Sales Tax (continued from page 1)

What happens if the current sales tax expires and is not replaced with the proposed sales tax?

The current sales tax provides nearly \$2.3 million to the City each year. Over the last 4 years, these funds have been used for the following:

Need	Amount (approx.)
<i>Tax Stabilization Projects</i>	
North Ohio Overpass	\$2,150,000
Fire Station No. 2 Expansion . .	\$1,320,000
Downtown Improvements	\$ 876,000
Direct Property Tax Stabilization	\$ 380,000
Street Maintenance and Repair	\$3,074,000
Major Equipment	\$1,667,000
Jobs for the Community	\$ 424,000
Human Services	\$ 791,000

These items have made a big difference in our community. Besides funding some key infrastructure needs, this tax has leveraged nearly 100 jobs and \$4,000,000 in combined annual wages and capital investment. If the current sales tax expires in 2010 without a replacement, these priorities will likely go unfunded in the future.

How much will the proposed sales tax generate each year?

The new sales tax will generate approximately \$4 million each year. This is about \$1.5 million more than the current sales tax.

When would the proposed sales tax end?

If approved, the proposed sales tax would soon replace the current tax so there is no duplication. It would then be in place for 10 years. This is enough

time to help fund larger projects where the City might need to issue bonds.

What will the proposed sales tax be used for?

The proposed sales tax will be used primarily for the same types of capital improvements as the current sales tax. A list of community needs to be funded include: street maintenance/repair, road construction, leveraging more quality jobs, family aquatic park, matching for project grants, property tax stabilization, park and trail improvements, traffic improvements, flood and drainage improvements, major building repair and upgrades, entryway/road corridor beautification and major equipment

replacement.

How do Salina's tax rates compare to other Kansas communities?

When comparing sales and property taxes against similar cities, Salina would still have one of the lowest overall tax burdens in Kansas.

Do sales taxes place more of a burden on those with lower incomes?

Yes, some say that sales taxes are regressive. However, the sales tax has historically been the most acceptable form of taxation to the public. In Salina, **nearly 1/3rd** of the revenue from our sales tax comes from outside our community. This is very good leveraging and helps fund projects that cannot be fully paid for by property taxes or local user fees. In addition, the proposed increase is very small (only 15 cents per \$100 spent) and most taxpayers agree that sales taxes are a much better option than the property tax.

With the cost of such things as gas and groceries continuing to rise, we recognize there is never really a good time for taxes. However, we also understand the need to provide our community with good roads, quality job opportunities and enjoyable things to do **LOCALLY** and at the lowest possible cost. It is for this reason that the marginal increase in the sales tax rate is so minimal. It is important to us that all of your questions are answered. For an answer to any question not listed here, please contact the City Manager's Office at (785) 309-5700.

City	Sales Tax %	Property Tax Rate (mills)
Derby	7.80%	48.155
Manhattan	7.55%	31.683
Topeka	7.45%	32.457
Junction City	7.30%	47.344
Salina	7.20% *	23.959
Hutchinson	7.05%	40.848
* Proposed tax rate		

2009 CITY BUDGET ADOPTED

A Challenging Year

In August, the City Commission finalized the 2009 City Budget. The annual budget is the plan for how money will be spent by the City. The budget is the result of countless hours of work by City staff. This effort results in the City Manager presenting a budget to the City Commission for approval. The annual budget hearing was held at the regular meeting of August 11, 2008, and the 2009 budget was adopted.

This year has been particularly challenging in light of the economic situation that our country is facing. City staff has had to work tirelessly to provide a budget that would maintain the high level of services that the citizens of Salina have come to expect. The total budget for all budgeted funds



will be \$69,429,380, compared to \$67,628,458 for 2008. General fund expenses increased from \$26,216,084 to \$27,160,883, an increase of 3.6%.

In order to manage the economic hardships, the budget includes a number of changes from previous years. These include a reduction in staffing by up to 15 positions through attrition, no cost of living allowance for City employees, an

increase in user fees and charges, and a 2.041 mill increase in the property tax. This tax increase amounts to an annual change of \$23.47 on a \$100,000 home in Salina. The increase in the mill levy will help to fund the new fixed-route transit bus system, offset the reduction due to the machinery and equipment exemption passed by the Kansas legislature, and offset increases in debt service due to the capital improvement program.

Many cities in Kansas and across the nation are experiencing some of the same hardships that Salina faces and while the next few years will be challenging, the City will remain diligent in its efforts to spend taxpayer dollars wisely. The City of Salina is committed to providing high level of services even in difficult times and continues to have one of the lowest tax rates in the State among similar sized cities.

capital improvement program

What Can We Expect In The Future

In times of hardship the first thing that most cities cut back is the capital improvement program (CIP). We believe that in order to grow and remain the lifeblood of the area, our CIP should remain progressive. The CIP strategy for 2009 is consistent with past years. The City's goals are to maintain the capacity and function of essential facilities serving the overall City, upgrade public facilities in areas where deficiencies may exist, and provide new and expanding facilities in locations experiencing growth and development. We believe that the CIP is one of the primary tools for shaping the community. Below are some examples of projects expected to be under construction in 2009:

Bicentennial Center Improvements: \$2,200,000

- ☐ Resurfacing of parking lots
- ☐ Modernization and expansion of the kitchen facilities
- ☐ Renovation and interior improvements-sound system, lighting, restrooms, seating, floor covering, ceiling tiles

Southeast Water and Wastewater System: \$2,150,000

- ☐ Design and construction of water and wastewater systems to serve both existing homes and developed areas near the intersection of Markley and Magnolia.

Wayfinding Signage / Median Landscaping: \$200,000

- ☐ New Directional signage master plan city-wide
- ☐ Median and interchange landscaping

Utility Enhancements: \$2,000,000

- ☐ Replacement of deteriorating lines, fire hydrants and manholes

Landfill Cell Construction: \$1,500,000

Street Maintenance: \$2,000,000

- ☐ Crack sealing and overlay
- ☐ Curb and gutter replacement
- ☐ Sidewalk ramps and sidewalk replacement

South Ninth Street Corridor: \$5,750,000

- ☐ Belmont Boulevard to Riffle Drive



Salina's Aquatic Park Project

save gas,
PLAY Here!

If the November sales tax is approved by voters, the City of Salina has committed to build for our community a \$12.5 million family aquatic park. This facility will replace our 52 year old pool and is a direct result of growing public sentiment over the last few years. Construction is to begin in April of 2009, with the aquatic park opening for the 2010 summer season.

This is a big investment from a seasonal perspective. However, our interest is based on use, not time of year. Over the summer season, we expect to have at least 1,500 to 2,000 users per day for each day of the season. With a 100 day season, this is 150,000 to 200,000 users per year! This would nearly exceed the use for ALL of our

Parks and Recreation programs combined (which are also seasonal). For this purpose, it is not an issue of when, but of how many!

The Family Water Park Concept

A family aquatic park is much different than a typical swimming pool, with features like zero entry, large slides and interactive spray features. While it still offers swimming, most features are available in about 3½ feet of water. Water recreation in Salina would now be available to those who cannot swim or just don't enjoy it. In short, this means water recreation **ACCESS FOR EVERYONE!**

Our Current Swimming Pool, Needs and Expectations

Our current pool is very old (built in 1956) and very difficult to keep in operation. It leaks tens of thousands of gallons of water per day, is costly to maintain and clearly does not meet our community's needs and expectations. While any lake, river, plant or new aquatic park will evaporate some water, the amount is relatively minor when compared to today's water loss from leakage.



Location, Location, Location!

The location for the proposed aquatic park is at the City's open sports field, just southwest of the Bicentennial Center in



Kenwood Park. This location results in NO land cost, NO road cost and NO utilities cost! Plus, this is a great, centralized location that offers a "sense of community" and can be easily served by our new fixed-route bus system.

How Salina's Proposed Aquatic Park Compares To Other Kansas Facilities

Some communities in Kansas that already have an aquatic park include Hays, Hutchinson, McPherson, Emporia, Great Bend and Derby. While our budget for this project is \$12.5 million, the facility must serve a growing town of nearly 50,000. When comparing facilities, it is important to consider both cost inflation and the project scale. For example, in 2003 a neighbor city of approximately 14,000 constructed a water park for \$4.3 million. At today's cost and scaled for a community Salina's size (over 3X larger) this facility would now cost nearly \$18 million!

This is a good illustration of how Salina's proposed project cost is actually very reasonable when compared to others in the region. In addition, ours will offer more features. Some say that with construction cost increases outpacing local revenue growth in recent years, the least expensive facility to build is the one built today!

Park Features Designed By The Community For Kids, Adults and Senior Citizens

The aquatic park features were chosen directly by the community through a survey with nearly 3,100 responses – an

incredible turnout! The top three most popular features include: zero depth entry area, a lazy river and water slides. Other popular features include a wave pool and river rapid slide. Salina will be able to boast that it is the only city in the State with some of these premier features, making it one of the most popular summer hotspots in Kansas.

The offerings for seniors are almost limitless! The facility will offer river walking (walking against the current) and other forms of aqua programming. Those who desire to relax can float the lazy river, swim in the lap pool or rest in the shade. Our faster features can also help those who wish to re-live their youth. Those with kids and grandkids that live outside Salina will notice that they now want to visit more than ever!

Fun and Affordability

We currently charge \$1.25 per day for adults and \$.75 for children to use the existing pool. While daily fees for a new aquatic park have not been set, they will be very comparable to similar facilities in our area. We will also offer very competitive multiple use and family discounts, a scholarship program for those that cannot



afford to pay, and a new senior discount. Anyone can use this facility for much less than the cost of a movie, lunch, bowling, or even a haircut.

What About Neighborhood Pools, Spray Grounds and That 50 Meter Option?

Neighborhood pools were considered. Unfortunately, the overall cost to operate multiple pools is much higher and the quality of features (i.e., lazy rivers, large slides, etc.) would be limited. In addition, other costs such as land purchase, road extensions and utilities would be likely.

The proposed plan also includes Salina's fourth neighborhood spray ground. This feature can be used separately from the water park and allows us to offer low-cost, neighborhood water play before and after the summer swimming season!

While the current plan does not offer a 50 meter pool option, it does have a 25 yard lap pool that can be used for competitive swimmers, recreational swimmers and child/adult programming. The 50 meter pool would cost about \$570,000 more. An Olympic size pool would cost about \$1.5 million more. These options offer no guarantee of hosting a swim meet and the use of space for this water area is a fraction of what it will be in the rest of the



park. With this in mind, the City Commission agreed to consider revising the plans if the community can raise the difference in cost by November!

Taking Care of The Aquatic Park For the Long Haul

As difficult as it has been, we have kept our current pool operational for 52 years — a long time even in pool years! The City has also met its commitment to keep our existing facility open while we plan for a new one. This is not the case in other nearby communities.

For the aquatic park, we will create a maintenance/repair reserve fund that can only be used for this purpose. We want this facility to be equal in quality to our parks, golf course, ball diamonds and soccer fields. This is our commitment to you for a long-term, quality facility!

It is important to us that all of your questions are answered. For an answer to any question not listed here, please contact the Parks & Recreation Department at (785) 309-5765.

city go™ BUS SYSTEM

to Begin Service in Salina Soon

At just \$30 for a monthly pass or \$1 per ride, far less than the price of a tank of gas, Salina residents will soon be able to travel much of Salina quickly and economically. CityGo, the Community's new fixed-route transit bus system, will initiate service this fall.

In funding partnership with the City of Salina and the Kansas Department of Transportation, Salina-based OCCK, Inc. will operate and manage CityGo transit services, including a fleet of six buses that will cover service area of more than 65 percent of the City.

"This is a very exciting project for OCCK and the City," said Patrick Wallerius, VP/CFO at OCCK and CityGo developer. "Not only are we offering a great service for residents, but we're also enhancing our community by providing economical transportation of a kind that hasn't been available for more than 50 years."

CityGo, which has been in development for almost two years, will span the City from North to South and East to West with three routes, easily identified by the colors red, blue and yellow. It's estimated that service will run from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, with more than 130 fixed bus stops citywide and four transfer points, making crossing from one route line to the next fast and efficient. During peak hours, between 6 a.m. and 9 a.m. and again from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Monday through Friday, bus service will run every 30 minutes. For the remaining service hours, or non-peak time, buses will run every 60 minutes. These times, as well as the routes and the bus stops, are subject to change, especially as service is initiated and information on ridership is analyzed.

Fares for the CityGo buses are expected to be \$1 per trip, \$2 for a 1-day pass, \$5 for a 6-day ticket, and \$30 for a

monthly pass. Children 10 and under will ride for free, but must be accompanied by someone 16 or older. Personal Care Attendants will also ride without charge.



While some wrinkles are to be expected when initiating a new service, OCCK and the City of Salina have taken many steps to ensure that development and operation of CityGo is as seamless as possible and easy to use for new bus riders. Riders will be able to easily identify the buses' bright green, organic design that features the CityGo logo. Bus stops will also feature an easy-to-see design.

The presence of a fixed-route bus service in Salina is especially important

given the economic impact that rising gasoline prices have had on motorists, as well as for the positive role it is likely to play in shaping Salina's economy. Mass transit systems across the country are seeing standing-room-only crowds on bus lines.

A fixed-route service in Salina is just one way community leaders can help residents to reach their destinations—including work, school, retail centers, restaurant, doctors' offices, city offices, churches and more. Routes have been structured so that these high-traffic areas, will be covered. As a result, more workers will be able to get to jobs, businesses can highlight the bus service in recruiting quality employees, and Salina's image as a business partner will improve.

In developing CityGo, OCCK also took into consideration the bus service's environmental impact on the community. By offering a fixed-route service, OCCK believes that fewer vehicles will travel Salina streets as motorists restructure their commutes. It is estimated that the fixed-route bus system will serve 60,000 citizens in the first year alone. Fewer vehicles will ultimately mean a reduction in traffic and pollution. Each bus's bright green design will serve as a reminder of CityGo's positive environmental role.

Since 1970, OCCK has worked to provide the highest quality services to the community. The same philosophy of service will be directed to overseeing the performance of the new CityGo fixed-route bus service. In addition to operating CityGo, OCCK will continue to run its paratransit service that is currently in operation. Riders wishing to continue this service will be required to submit an application in advance to qualify usage.

For more information about Salina's new fixed-route transit bus system please contact OCCK at 785-827-9383 or visit the CityGo website at www.salinacitygo.com.



construction project UPDATE - Progress Continues

South Ohio Project

City project number 03-1402 is **Phase IV** of the City's current effort to upgrade South Ohio Street. According to the May 1999 South Ohio Street concept study performed by Wilson & Company, Inc.:

- Phase I included major street and drainage improvements from Belmont Boulevard to Magnolia Road and was completed in November 2000 at a cost of \$4 million.
- Phase II includes improvements on Magnolia Road from Ohio Street to the east City limits and is awaiting State funding.
- Phase III includes flood control enhancements in the Holmquist Oxbow area and has not been pursued by the City; and
- **Phase IV** includes the conversion of the rural, two-lane portion of South Ohio Street from Magnolia Road to Schilling Road into an urban four-lane facility and was also designed by Wilson & Company.
- Eighty percent of the construction and inspection costs, up to \$3 million, is being funded by KDOT, for a maximum KDOT obligation of \$2.4 million.



Two lanes down, two to go.

The construction contract was awarded to Smoky Hill LLC of Salina last December for just under \$2.6 million.

In addition to upgrading the facility from two to four lanes, the current project includes significantly improving the drainage of the facility through the addition of curb and gutter, and the addition of a ten-foot wide concrete hike and bike path east of Ohio Street

that will connect Schilling Road and Jerry Ivey Park. Current construction is focused on the new northbound lanes, including the removal of the old asphalt pavement, the installation of storm sewer, earthwork, and the placement of new concrete pavement. At the current rate of



ADA Pedestrian Access, a high priority.

progress, this phase of the project should be completed around the first part of August. Following completion of the northbound lanes, similar construction will be initiated to construct the southbound lanes, which should be completed this fall if all goes according to plan.

Other Construction Projects

North Ohio Grade Separation – The City, KDOT, consulting engineering firm and the contractor are working on a process to begin repairs of the cracking on the parapet wall of the overpass, as well as address a number of punch list items.

North Ohio Street Project Aesthetics – The contractor has completed the drip irrigation system and summer plantings and continues to work on the brick pavers at York and Van Horne. Fall plantings and all other work should be completed by the end of October.

Red Fox Addition – The contractor has constructed the utility and street infrastructure. Some sidewalk ramps and drainage structures are the only items remaining. This project will be completed by mid October.

Concrete Pavement Improvements – The project includes patching existing concrete streets located at Fairdale Road, Westport Boulevard, and Graves Boulevard. The contractor is currently working

on Graves Boulevard and should be completed by early November.

Arterial Street Sidewalk Improvements

– The project includes constructing sidewalks on Republic Street west of Broadway Boulevard and on Markley Road south of Crawford Street. Construction is substantially complete with final items to be addressed this week.

Spring and Fall Street Marking – Many of Salina's streets are repainted each spring and fall, and the current contract covers the 2008 and 2009 street marking. The next painting cycle is scheduled for this fall in October.

ADA Ramps – This project includes the installation of approximately 80 ADA compliant ramps along sidewalks in various locations in the City (right). The work should be completed this fall.

North Second Street Railroad Crossing Removal – This project included the removal of the railroad crossing between Ash and Elm Streets. Construction was completed mid September.



Just a memory for now.

Broadway / Hageman Intersection Improvements

– This project includes the reconstruction of the Broadway/Hageman intersection and the removal of the pedestrian bridge over Broadway (above). The contractor is working on street pavement and sidewalks to be completed by the end of October.

South 9th St. Whitetopping – This project includes a concrete overlay from Broadway to Otto. Construction should begin in early October.

thebigideas

A Creative Vision for Salina and Beyond

The result of a 13-month cultural assessment, The Big Ideas is a strategic plan for Salina Arts and Humanities Commission which provides a guide for enriching the City's cultural life for the next five years.

The plan is based on findings from contacts with many, many Salinans.



From February through May 2007, facilitator Diane L. Mataraza talked with over 800 people in forums held in board rooms

and break rooms; she met with line workers at Tony's, social service providers at CAPS, members of the Chamber of Commerce's Economic Development Board, and a multitude of Salina's artists and arts administrators. The public weighed in through an on-line survey advertised in the *Salina Journal* and on paper (in English and Spanish) at Wal-Mart. In all, nearly 1,200 citizens answered questions about their perceptions of current arts and culture offerings and their desires for service.

The strategic plan identifies five key areas for actions:

- increased access to cultural activities to the broadest range of Salina communities;
- improvement in the built environment around the City;
- participation of arts and culture in the City's economic development and downtown redevelopment;
- encouragement of the stability, education and growth of Salina's artists and cultural organizations;
- and re-focusing of the role of Salina Arts and Humanities Commission/Department as a provider of support services to artists and cultural organizations.

The City Commission approved the strategic plan in February 2008.

we're at YOUR service

In order to serve you better, City staff maintains a computerized Citizen Service Request (CSR) system. This system assists staff in expediting and effectively responding to citizen concerns.

If you have questions or service requests, please contact the City Manager's office at (785) 309-5700. You may also send questions or requests via our e-mail link on the City of Salina's official municipal website: www.salina-ks.gov

The plan fully kicks in the summer and fall of 2008 with a Steering Committee led by prominent community volunteers. More to come!

Policy of Non-Discrimination on the Basis of Disability

The City of Salina does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in its programs or activities.

The Director of Human Resources has been designated to coordinate compliance with nondiscrimination requirements contained in section 35-107 of the Department of Justice regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the ADA coordinator.

For information contact:

ADA Coordinator
(785) 309-5700

City Manager's Office
City of Salina
300 W. Ash

Salina, Kansas 67401
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(TDD) (785) 309-5747

Articles were written by city staff, edited by staff in the City Manager's Office, and designed by Consolidated Printing. Questions/Comments? Call the City Manager's office at (785) 309-5700.

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city commissioners want to hear from you!

Members of the Salina City Commission are always interested in your comments and suggestions on city services and policies.

Each Commissioner welcomes letters and telephone calls. Write them at P.O. Box 736, Salina, KS 67402-0736.

Commissioner's phone numbers are:

John K. Vanier II	404-2111
Alan Jilka	827-0002
Luci Larson	827-7777
Aaron Peck	493-8220
R. Abner Perney	452-9711